



**For Release: Wednesday, December 12, 2018**

**18-1963-BOS**

NEW ENGLAND INFORMATION OFFICE: Boston, Mass.

Technical information: (617) 565-2327 BLSInfoBoston@bls.gov [www.bls.gov/regions/new-england](http://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england)

Media contact: (617) 565-2326 BLSMediaBoston@bls.gov

## **Consumer Price Index, Boston-Cambridge-Newton — November 2018**

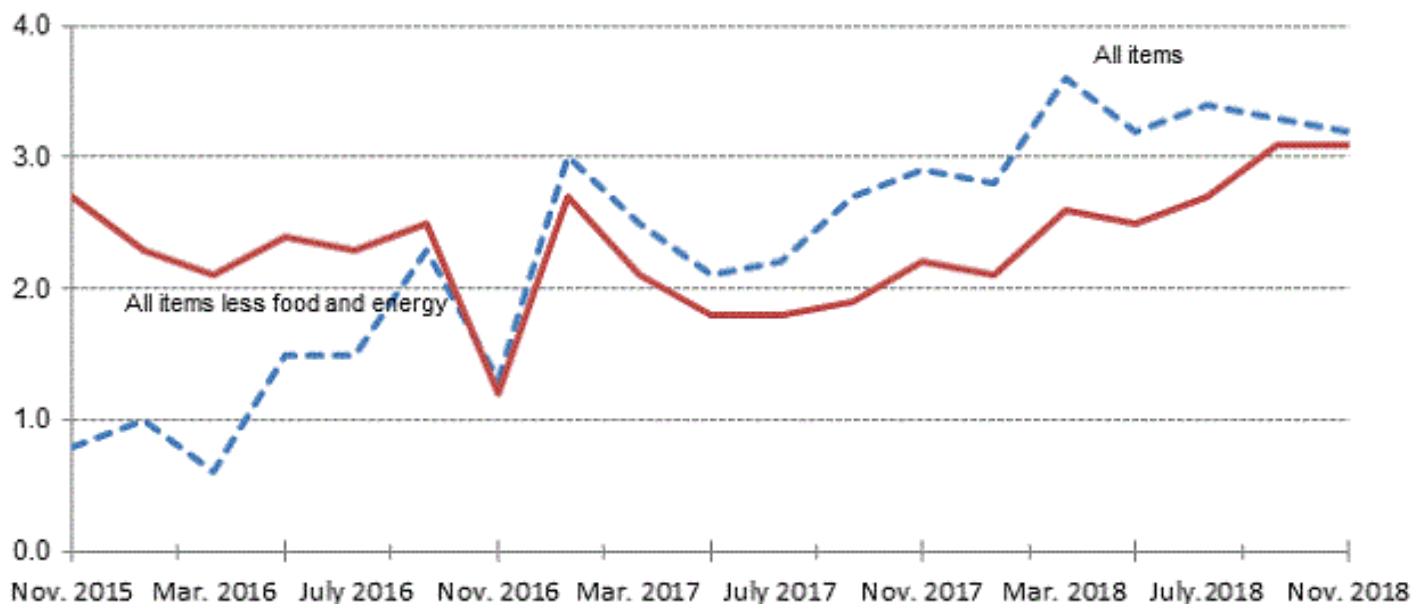
### **Area prices down 0.4 percent over two months; up 3.2 percent from a year ago**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Cambridge-Newton area decreased 0.4 percent in November, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that this was mainly attributable to lower prices within all items less food and energy, down 0.6 percent and to a lesser extent lower food prices, down 1.1 percent. Higher energy prices, up 4.0 percent partially offset the decrease. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bimonthly changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the Boston CPI-U rose 3.2 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher prices within all items less food and energy up 3.1 percent and to a lesser extent higher energy prices paid by area consumers, up 6.9 percent. (See [chart 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, November 2015 - November 2018**

Percent



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Food**

Food prices edged down 1.1 percent since September, mainly due to lower food at home prices, down 2.0 percent. Lower food at home prices were mainly driven by lower prices for fruits and vegetables, down 11.6 percent.

Food prices increased 1.7 percent over the year, mainly due to higher food away from home prices, up 2.7 percent, and to a lesser extent, food at home prices, up 1.1 percent.

## **Energy**

The energy index increased 4.0 percent over the two months, mainly driven by higher utility piped gas prices, up 32.9 percent due to suppliers switching to winter rates. Higher electricity prices, up 4.2 percent also contributed to the increase which was offset by lower gasoline prices down 3.6 percent.

Energy prices were up 6.9 percent from a year ago, largely attributable to gasoline prices, up 8.7 percent and electricity prices, up 5.3 percent.

## **All items less food and energy**

The index for all items less food and energy decreased from September (-0.6 percent) mainly due to lower shelter costs, down 0.7 percent and to a lesser extent, lower apparel costs, down 6.7 percent. Within shelter, lower prices in lodging away from home, drove the decrease.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 3.1 percent, with higher shelter costs being the main driver of the increase, up 4.6 percent. Within shelter, higher costs for owners' equivalent rent of residences, up 4.7 percent and rent of primary residence, up 4.6 percent led the increase.

## **CPI-W**

In November, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 277.413. The CPI-W decreased 0.1 percent over two months and increased 3.3 percent over the year.

---

**The January 2019 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Cambridge-Newton is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, February 13, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).**

## **Technical Note**

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 94 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.












































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi) and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf).

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Mass.-N.H. Core Based Statistical Area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk Counties in Massachusetts; Rockingham, Strafford Counties in New Hampshire.














Information from this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Ma.-N.H. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Sep. 2018	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018	Nov. 2017	Sep. 2018	Oct. 2018
All items .....		278.663		277.632	3.2	-0.4	
All items (1967 = 100) .....		809.941		806.946			
Food and beverages .....		267.884		264.467	1.5	-1.3	
Food .....		269.284		266.382	1.7	-1.1	
Food at home .....		254.831	250.591	249.715	1.1	-2.0	-0.3
Cereal and bakery products .....		293.670		292.317	-0.4	-0.5	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs .....		250.017		255.373	2.5	2.1	
Dairy and related products .....		284.950		287.058	9.3	0.7	
Fruits and vegetables .....		355.764		314.498	-2.9	-11.6	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) .....		162.579		163.407	1.5	0.5	
Other food at home .....		199.178		199.126	0.6	0.0	
Food away from home .....		294.499		295.534	2.7	0.4	
Alcoholic beverages .....		256.270		246.882	-0.6	-3.7	
Housing .....		287.056		287.035	4.2	0.0	
Shelter .....		341.399	343.172	338.854	4.6	-0.7	-1.3
Rent of primary residence(2) .....		353.083	354.814	355.082	4.6	0.6	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)(3)(4) .....		360.965	361.948	363.452	4.7	0.7	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)(3)(4) .....		360.965	361.948	363.452	4.7	0.7	0.4
Fuels and utilities .....		278.665		305.274	5.6	9.5	
Household energy .....		234.269	236.373	258.417	5.7	10.3	9.3
Energy services(2) .....		239.320	239.356	270.334	4.5	13.0	12.9
Electricity(2) .....		291.848	291.910	303.965	5.3	4.2	4.1
Utility (piped) gas service(2) .....		153.190	153.190	203.570	3.0	32.9	32.9
Household furnishings and operations .....		128.082		123.966	-1.5	-3.2	
Apparel .....		151.353		141.282	-0.2	-6.7	
Transportation .....		197.275		196.925	4.2	-0.2	
Private transportation .....		198.872		197.966	4.9	-0.5	
New and used motor vehicles(5) .....		103.074		104.487	4.4	1.4	
New Vehicles(1) .....		203.769		207.482	4.1	1.8	
Used cars and trucks(1) .....		309.233		315.519	2.9	2.0	
Motor fuel .....		250.583	248.129	241.684	8.8	-3.6	-2.6
Gasoline (all types) .....		247.728	245.281	238.902	8.7	-3.6	-2.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular(6) .....		241.038	238.522	232.165	8.9	-3.7	-2.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(6)(7) .....		260.175	257.223	252.895	8.8	-2.8	-1.7
Gasoline, unleaded premium(6) .....		254.081	252.795	247.102	7.0	-2.7	-2.3
Motor vehicle insurance(1) .....							
Medical care .....		651.678		656.108	1.5	0.7	
Recreation(5) .....		123.267		123.936	3.4	0.5	
Education and communication(5) .....		166.898		166.050	1.7	-0.5	
Tuition, other fees, and child care(1) .....		1,348.743		1,348.743	3.2	0.0	
Other goods and services .....		492.088		489.490	1.3	-0.5	
<b>Commodity and service group</b>							
Commodities .....		195.771		192.091	1.7	-1.9	
Commodities less food and beverages .....		157.944		154.244	1.8	-2.3	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Ma.-N.H. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Sep. 2018	Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018	Nov. 2017	Sep. 2018	Oct. 2018
Nondurables less food and beverages...		211.679		204.755	2.8	-3.3	
Durables .....		107.270		106.392	0.3	-0.8	
Services.....		353.745		354.920	3.8	0.3	
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>							
All items less shelter.....		256.436		256.108	2.3	-0.1	
All items less medical care .....		264.213		263.032	3.3	-0.4	
Commodities less food .....		161.916		158.004	1.7	-2.4	
Nondurables .....		238.921		233.740	2.1	-2.2	
Nondurables less food.....		213.920		206.851	2.5	-3.3	
Services less rent of shelter(3).....		384.591		391.396	2.9	1.8	
Services less medical care services.....		332.501		333.589	4.0	0.3	
Energy .....		239.658	239.767	249.278	6.9	4.0	4.0
All items less energy .....		286.290		284.295	2.9	-0.7	
All items less food and energy .....		290.080		288.233	3.1	-0.6	

**Footnotes**

(1) Indexes on a January 1978=100 base.

(2) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(3) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(5) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(6) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(7) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.